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Thousands Evacuated in Russian Bomb Scares, But State TV Stays Quiet

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Alexey Belkin / TASS

A wave of bomb scares has led to tens of thousands of people being evacuated throughout the country, but the news has been ignored by Russian state television.

Since Sunday, cities across Russia have conducted evacuations after receiving anonymous bomb threats. On Wednesday, evacuations took place in Moscow at malls, including the GUM department store on Red Square, train stations, universities and hotels. The state-run TASS agency said 50,000 people were evacuated, while Interfax put the number at 100,000.

In Moscow, more than 100,000 people were evacuated on Wednesday from malls, including the GUM department store on Red Square, train stations, universities and hotels, the Interfax news agency reported."

Related article: Mass Evacuations in Russian Cities Continue After Bomb Threats

But state television, through which most Russians get their news, has barely covered the evacuations, the Bell outlet reports.

Out of the state-run television channels, only Rossia-1 mentioned the evacuations, the Bell said, citing data from the media-monitoring company Medialogia. The news did not make it into any of Russia's primetime news programs, including Rossia-1's "Vesty" and Channel One's "Vremya" news shows.

Only Rossia 24, Russian Public Television (OTR), RBC and the opposition-leaning Dozhd channels ran segments on the mass evacuations on Wednesday, the Bell said.

The bomb threats began in Omsk and Ryazan on Sunday, and were followed by anonymous phone calls in half a dozen Russian cities on Monday.

By Tuesday, the threats had reached Siberia and the Far East, forcing the evacuation of an estimated 45,000 people in cities including Novosibirsk and Yekaterinburg.

On Wednesday around a dozen cities throughout Russia evacuated schools, stations, airports and government buildings.

There has been little official information about the wave of bomb threats, with some media citing local law enforcement officials as saying they are drills. Other media cite anonymous sources as saying the phone calls are being made online from abroad.

An unnamed source close to the security services told RBC late on Wednesday the calls have been tracked to an IP-address in Ukraine.

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